

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O P 121119Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9730

INFO AMEMBASSY SAIGON PRIORITY

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI PRIORITY

COMUSSAG NKP THAI PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 4496

EXDIS

DEPT ALSO PASS INFO PRIORITY SECDEF WASHDC

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: AEMR, EAID, CB, VS

SUBJECT: E&E: USE OF AID-CHARTERED DC-8 RICE AIRLIFT FLIGHTS

FOR PASSENGERS FROM PHNOM PENH TO SAIGON

REF: A. SAIGON 2716

B. PHNOM PENH 4439

C. PHNOM PENH 4319

1. SHORTLY AFTER RECEIPT REFTEL A, DCM RECEIVED NOTE FROM COUNSELOR OF RVN EMBASSY ASKING FOR APPOINTMENT TO DISCUSS "URGENT MATTER". WE ANTICIPATE THAT MATTER IN QUESTION WILL BE "REQUEST THAT WE ASSIST IN EVACUATING ABOUT 600 VIETNAMESE NATIONALS FROM PHNOM PENH USING RICE AIRLIFT CHARTERED DC-8 ON RETURN TRIP TO TAN SON NHUT" (REFTEL A). DCM HAS SET APPOINTMENT WITH RVN EMBASSY COUNSELOR FOR 1130 HOURS LOCAL MARCH 13. REQUEST INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE DEPARTMENT, IF POSSIBLE PRIOR TO THAT TIME, AS TO HOW WE SHOULD RESPOND TO ANTICIPATED VIETNAMESE REQUEST.

2. IN THIS CONNECTION, WE WOULD LIKE TO DRAW THE DEPARTMENT'S ATTENTION TO PARA 3 OF REFTEL C, WHICH REPORTED PRIME MINISTER LONG BORET'S REMARKS TO THE AMBASSADOR
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REGARDING THE ADVERSE PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECT ON THE KHMERS

OF THE EVACUATION OF FOREIGN NATIONALS FROM CAMBODIA. LONG BORET CITED THE EXAMPLE OF THE EVACUATION OF MANY VIETNAMESE NATIONALS BY VIETNAMESE PLANES BROUGHT IN FOR THIS PURPOSE LAST WEEK. PRIME MINISTER SAID THIS ACTION HAD "SHAKEN THE KHMERS" AS IT APPEARED TO BE A VOTE OF "NON-CONFIDENCE" IN THE GKR'S FUTURE. USG ACTION IN SUPPORT OF A VIETNAMESE EVACUATION, SUCH AS THAT RAISED IN REFTEL A, WOULD OF COURSE TEND TO BE INTERPRETED AS A VOTE OF NO CONFIDENCE BY THE USG AS WELL.

3. ON GENERAL SUBJECT OF EVACUATION PLANNING, WE HAVE BEEN RECEIVING A NUMBER OF INQUIRIES FROM PRESS CORRESPONDENTS REGARDING WHAT PLANS WE MAY HAVE FOR EVACUATING OUR KHMER EMPLOYEES SHOULD THIS SITUATION DETERIORATE TO THE POINT THAT WE WOULD HAVE TO EFFECT A GENERAL EVACUATION OF AMERICANS AND OTHERS FOR WHOM WE ARE RESPONSIBLE. IT IS MORE THAN A LITTLE IRONIC THAT SOME OF THE JOURNALISTS WHO RAISE THIS QUESTION ARE THE SAME ONES WHO LIKE TO INSIST THAT THERE WILL BE NO "BLOOD BATH" IN PHNOM PENH SHOULD THE KC TAKE OVER THE CITY BY MILITARY FORCE. WE SUPPOSE THAT FOR THEM THE TERM "BLOOD BATH" DOES NOT ENCOMPASS THE ELIMINATION OF KHMERS WHO HAVE WORKED FOR OR OTHERWISE BEEN CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH THE OFFICIAL AMERICAN ESTABLISHMENT IN CAMBODIA.

4. WE BELIEVE IT WOULD BE HIGHLY APPROPRIATE FOR THE DEPARTMENT AT THIS TIME TO GIVE SOME THOUGHT TO THIS QUESTION OF OUR MORAL OBLIGATION TO OUR KHMER EMPLOYEES, SOME OF WHOM HAVE WORKED FOR US FOR VERY MANY YEARS AND ALL OF WHOM ARE LIABLE TO BE TARGETED BY A VENGEFUL KC SHOULD THEY TAKE THE CITY BY FORCE. AS THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, THIS CATEGORY OF PERSONNEL DOES NOT FIGURE AT ALL REPEAT AT ALL IN OUR OPERATION EAGLE PULL EVACUATION PLANS.
DEAN

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED SECDEF
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Margaret P. Grafeld
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